

- Is there more information about starting an RCO? Another workshop perhaps?
 - All information from our trainings, as well as our Code, regulations, RCO rights and responsibilities can be found on our website [here](#). You can also contact RCO@phila.gov with further questions.
- Without enforcement, the RCO process is flawed, not based on fairness or genuine community input, but on the whims of Council.
 - Discuss this with your Councilperson and encourage them to allocate funding and resources to RCO enforcement.
- Is there a proper form to announcing a public meeting? Asking because the last RCO meeting announcement I saw only said that a meeting was to be held, TBA.
 - Zoning Board applicants are given two templates to notify neighbors about public meetings. The first template is when RCOs let the applicant know in a timely manner when the meeting is so the meeting information is included in the notice. A second template is available that alerts neighbors that a meeting will be happening, but it is unclear when. The applicant uses this second letter if the RCO does not get back to them in a timely manner or in other circumstances where the applicant does not have the meeting information to distribute.
- Are all relevant RCO's notified of Civic Design Review meetings? If not, what is the selection process?
 - Yes, all affected RCOs are notified of CDR meetings. Coordinating RCOs are selected the same way as for a regular zoning board hearing—by the District Councilperson's office.
- Would like an expanded answer as to what an appropriate proviso is vs. a NDA for a project.
 - A proviso must bring the application closer to compliance and prevent or minimize any adverse public impact. All provisos MUST be zoning related, enforceable by L&I, reasonably related to the anticipated adverse impact
- Is there help for regulating people being put on video of people who don't want faces on public media?
 - The legality of taking photos and video is complicated and restricting an individual's ability to take photos or video could run into First Amendment free speech issues depending on the meeting venue. If you want to regulate video at public meetings, you could make an announcement that you do not permit video to protect the opinions expressed at the meeting, but proceed carefully when it comes to enforcement or confrontation.
- Can you explain over the counter permits? Why are permits granted without notification?
 - There are base zoning districts on a peoples' property that grant the owner of the property certain rights to build to a certain height and width and to use that property for certain uses-residential, commercial, industrial, etc. When a person applies to the Department of Licenses and Inspections for a permit to build something that meets the base zoning district's regulations, this considered an "over-the-counter" or "by right" permit. There is no notification because what the property owner is doing is perfectly legal and within their rights to do and because there is a certain level of predictability in the development you can expect from the base zoning code on the site.
- Can a person be on the Board of two coordinating RCOs at the same time? Regulations should be made.
 - There are no regulations around people serving on the Board of multiple RCOs.
- Why can a community group change the name of an area, without the community's vote? Ex. Point Breeze vs New Bold?
 - RCOs can choose whatever name they like and their name does not necessarily reflect what most residents call a neighborhood.
- I am Ward 54 RCO. My meetings are held when Take Back Your Neighborhood schedules them, as they are the coordinating RCO. Do I still have to submit a meeting schedule when I renew?
 - Yes, you still have to submit a meeting schedule when you renew.

- How does an RCO handle a developer (business) who attempts to subvert the process? That is, when the developer bypasses the RCO and personally contacts community members?
 - There are no restrictions or regulations in the Code that restrict a developer from reaching out to neighbors. However, if you believe a developer is giving neighbors false information on purpose, to the best of your ability, keep records of your interactions with the developer and get things in writing whenever possible and notify the ZBA or testify at the ZBA hearing.
- RCO areas seem very large. How do you/can we make RCO's accountable for the entire area?
 - If an RCO is holding the regular meetings mentioned in their bylaws and is holding meetings when chosen as a Coordinating RCO, then they are fulfilling one of their primary duties. If they do not have the ability to handle meeting volume due to the size of their area, they are not meeting the requirements of being an RCO and may be subject to disciplinary action and eventually suspension by the Planning Commission

QUESTIONS FROM FLIPCHART:

1. When notice of a meeting goes out, some people send it by certified mail – is it possible to keep a certificate of mailing but send it via regular mail?
 - a. We cannot regulate how applicants send out their notification of neighbors. RCOs can request applicants send their notices a certain way, but it is up to the applicant ultimately how they choose to distribute notice. There is legislation that has been introduced in City Council, Bill No. 180295 that would require applicants to send out two notification mailings by certified mail. It is the understanding of the Planning Commission that they mean to change this to certified mail, but amendments have not been introduced thus far.
2. How is a coordinating RCO chosen?
 - a. The District Council office chooses the Coordinating RCO.
3. How are developers held accountable to provisos?
 - a. L+I enforces provisos connected to zoning variances and special exceptions.
4. The date by which an RCO must hold a meeting isn't always 45 days—what to do/who to contact to extend that time period?
 - a. The applicant has 10 days from the date the RCO notice is emailed or mailed to reach out the RCO and distribute notice of a community meetings and ZBA case to near neighbors within 250 feet of the development project. If the applicant takes more than 10 days to accomplish this task, the RCO is given 45 days from the date the applicant distributes notice.
5. How do we play a part in Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)?
 - a. We encourage RCOs to reach out to their local BIDs and establish relationships with them. If your group and the BID have common goals along a commercial corridor, you can form partnerships with them, as well.
6. When the Code is updated, how can RCOs learn about changes
 - a. Community planners from the Planning Commission often work with RCOs and local community groups to craft changes to the Code. If the change originates from City Council, community planners will often reach out to community groups and RCOs to let them know about the upcoming change. RCOs can also keep track of legislation that is introduced by checking <https://phila.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx/Help2.html> to see what bills are being introduced that may affect their neighborhood. Code change bills also must be heard by the Planning Commission, which holds monthly meetings at its center city offices in Room 18-029, One Parkway Building, 1515 Arch St. You can see the meeting schedule here <http://www.phila.gov/CityPlanning/meetingsandevents/Pages/Calendar.aspx> and you can often view

the meetings live here: <http://www.phila.gov/channel64/pages/default.aspx> if you are unable to make it in person. City Council Committees and full Council hearings can also be viewed live on this site.

7. How can developers bypass RCOs by going to Council?
 - a. This would be spot zoning, which is a practice discouraged by the Planning Commission and which is often not recommended at Planning Commission's monthly meetings.
8. When/why did issue-based RCOs go away?
 - a. Issue-based RCOs were removed via legislation passed in early 2014. The legislation created new regulations about coordinating between RCOs and standardized notification for locally impacted parties. This localized and centralized the RCO process far more than the original regulations which left notification to applicants followed by a 2013 amendment moving notification to RCOs, which was not popular. Issue-based RCO did not have a role in the ZBA process, notification, or coordination as their only role was just for informational purposes.
9. How can an individual become an RCO?
 - a. They can't. If there is an RCO comprised of only one individual, then they misrepresented their group on their RCO application. We encourage groups with evidence of one-person groups to reach out to RCO@phila.gov.